

MadFolk News

Our first MadFolk Concert of the Year...

DAN BERN January 23rd at The Brink!

♪ We open our season with Dan Bern, although not new to the Madison music scene, this is the first time he will play a MadFolk show. The following is what the press kit says about him and his newest cd, further in to the newsletter you will see what our local CD reviewer has to say about the CD, but best opinion is your own, please come out to see Dan live, give him a big MadFolk welcome to our stage and hear him for yourself, he won't disappoint!

"Dan Bern is a throwback, a singer-songwriter who marvels at life's beauty, fragility, and complexity with a fresh, defiantly uncompromising style. In a perfect world, he'd be as beloved as Dylan or Lennon—he's that good!" So wrote *Stereophile* magazine contributing editor David Sokol for that publication's popular *Records To Die For* feature several

years back.

A remarkably prolific songsmith, Dan has released some two dozen studio albums, EPs, and live recordings since his first acclaimed Sony-distributed CD in 1997. Either fronting the prodigiously talented band *Common Rotation* or as a solo performer, he is comfortable and convincing, funny and topical, with an unassuming tip of the hat to the spirits Woody Guthrie, Johnny Cash, the Beatles, and young Bob Dylan—all while sounding thoroughly original and 21st-century. Whether writing about stepping back and appreciating the world around us ("Breathe") or celebrating the venerable voice of the Los Angeles Dodgers ("The Golden Voice of Vin Scully"), Dan's songs are always literary, sometimes funny, and often cinematic. And it's not uncommon at a Dan Bern concert to

see and hear fans unabashedly singing along to one song after another with no prompting from the stage.

Dan Bern recordings have featured a host of artists ranging from Ani DiFranco to Emmylou Harris, and he's devoted entire albums to baseball (*Doubleheader*), politics (*My Country II*), and little kids (*2 Feet Tall*). His singular songwriting has led to stints working on such projects as the Judd Apatow features *Walk Hard—the Dewey Cox Story* (starring John C. Reilly) and *Get Him to the Greek* (starring Russell Brand). His songs have appeared in numerous TV shows, and he recently penned the theme song for the Amazon cartoon *The Stinky and Dirty Show*.

Dan's new full-length studio album, *Hoody*, has been released and the album was recorded primarily in Los Angeles at Pehrspace in the Echo Park neighborhood. Featuring one of his most engaging and eclectic collections of songs, with support from *Common Rotation*, *Hoody* digs deeply into Dan's affinity for country, rock, and folk with a punch and poignancy rarely heard these days. And his voice has never sounded richer and more powerful. The record has a warm, organic feel, with the band usually performing together in the same room, at the same time. Beside Dan, who plays acoustic and electric guitars and some harmonica, musicians on the album include Adam Busch (drums, harmonica), Jordan Katz (trumpet, banjo), Eric Kufs (lap steel, vocals), Johnny Flaughter (bass), Eben



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Grace (guitar), and George Sluppick and Tripp Beam (drums). And Hoody was co-produced by Dan with his old friend Greg Prestopino, whose long list of credits includes co-writing Matthew Wilder's ubiquitous Top 5 hit, "Break My Stride" from 1983. Says Dan, "The way we recorded the stuff was a bit rough in spots, and Greg was able to massage it really well."

Hoody is filled with highlights and surprises, including "Lifeline," a stunning up-tempo country-rocker. The song, which soberly celebrates resiliency, features guest vocals by original Old Crow Medicine Show member Willie Watson and Common Rotation lap-steel guitarist Eric Kufs, who co-wrote the song with Dan. And somehow Dan holds one particularly challenging note for 20 seconds toward the end of the song. Like the thoughtful "Turn on a Dime," "Lifeline" would sound awfully good on progressive-country radio.

As would "Merle, Hank & Johnny," which not only pays homage to those country icons but to Buck Owens, Jimmie Rodgers, and George Jones (and is as loving an ode as his tip of the hat to Vin Scully on 2012's Drifter). The song is powerfully autobiographical, capped off with the sentiment that no matter what music his young daughter ultimately listens to, she's sure to hear Haggard and Williams and Cash as she grows up.


Speaking of Dan's little one, Lulu (who chipped in a few chirps on 2 Feet Tall) has a short but charming three letter cameo (singing "JFK") on "Waffle House," a hilarious live showstopper delineating one of the true dividing lines in modern-day America: "Red states got the Waffle House, blue states don't." On Hoody, the song barely clocks in at a minute-and-a-half, but Dan packs a lot into it.

Another gem on Hoody is the harder rocking "Welcome," a three-minute indictment of our modern-day information overload. With an infectious melody belying the song's powerfully topical message, Dan poses the question, "What's in your wallet, and which side are you on?" On a lighter note, there's a charmingly spirited take on Johnny Cash's novel 1976 country chart-topper, "One Piece at a Time." The album closes with one of Dan's loveliest songs ever. "Sky"—with the timelessness that graces "Soul," the brilliant closing song on 2003's *Fleeting Days*—is a heart-breakingly beautiful love song, not just to a true love, but to life itself. "Long as I can see the sky...nothing can bring me down."

Reflecting on Hoody, Dan confides, "I feel it's a really strong record. I think it's got a lot of elements—old folk, classic country, British Invasion—but it all holds together. It's the culmination of what I've been aiming at for a long time, and also a jumping off point for everything I'm aiming to do next. I feel like the right radio stations could find a lot here to work with. I was aiming high and knew what I was after, and with a great team was able to achieve it. I hope people will hear it."

Hoody is fresh and contemporary, and certainly deserves to be heard... a lot. Dan is clearly standing on the shoulders of giants as he observes the world around him and puts all the bustle and the craziness into perspective. He's a songwriter's songwriter and a lyrical genius with a huge, optimistic heart, as anyone who's heard his songs can attest to. (Who else could write songs as diverse and pithy as "The Fifth Beatle," "Osama in Obamaland," and "Year-By-Year Home Run Totals of Barry

Mad Folk Concert Tickets

When you see this symbol –  – you'll know that you're reading about a Mad Folk sponsored event. Advance tickets for Mad Folk shows are available online at www.madfolk.org and at these outlets:

- Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street
- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

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<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879>

You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-846-9214 for information.

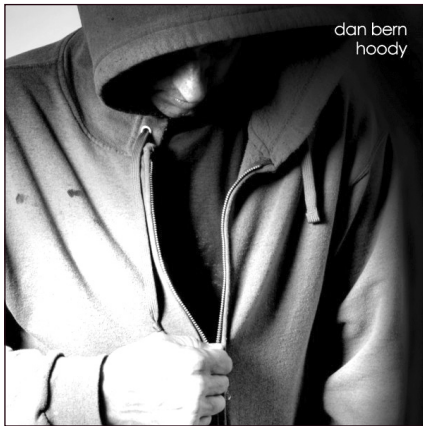
Bonds"?)

Like we said, Dan Bern is a throwback to the days of exemplary songs and extraordinary songwriters. He's one of the very best, and we sure could use more of his kind these days.

Tickets are available at our outlets and will be available at the door, \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. Location is The Brink Lounge, 7:00 show time and doors open at 6:30, come sooner that and enjoy some food and beverages in Lounge area of The Brink.

If you are on Facebook, please consider (if you have not already) "friending" or is it "liking" this page. Then when you are on this page you can invite others to "like" this page.

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Review by Kiki Schueler

The songs on Dan Bern's new release, *Hoody*, are just as comfortable as the titular apparel. After only a few listens you find yourself singing along, wondering if maybe you've heard these seemingly familiar songs somewhere else. With the exception of Clarence Wayne Kemp's hilarious "One Piece at a Time," a hit for Johnny Cash, these are all Bern originals. He's never been shy about his influences—Cash, Dylan, Springsteen, Guthrie—and you can hear all of them in these songs. He name checks the country contingent in "Merle, Hank & Johnny," an ode to the musical constants in his life. Even when it was all about rock & roll as a kid, or music with drum machines as a teen, the country music was always there, "you'd hear it wafting low on the radio." He wonders what music his daughter will hold dear, but he plans to do his part, "I'll make sure she hears Merle and Hank and Johnny, Buck Owens, Jimmy Rodgers and George Jones."

She's undoubtedly been listening to her dad's music, and young Lulu contributes backing vocals to "Waffle House," which simplifies the political difference between the states. "Red states got the Waffle House, blue states don't." In truth, it's not so much "vocals" as it is "vocal," she echoes "JFK" when

he asks, "What makes a fella favor Nixon over JFK? Might be all of them hash browns." He proceeds to name all the various ways you can get them: scattered, smothered, covered, chunked, etc. There may not be much truth to his theory (though it is worth mentioning the nearest Waffle House is in Indiana, 280 miles away), but it did make me hungry. Paired with the aforementioned "One Piece at a Time" in the latter half of the record, they make for a humorous interlude on a disc that's already delightfully light-hearted.

The carefree and clever "Lifeline," a cheerful ramble helped along by a few unspecified guest vocals (though one likely belongs to Old Crow Medicine Show's Willie Watson), may be the record's standout track. He starts off claiming "They say I been carousing too much. Drinking like a sailor and smoking like the Dutch. But I don't mind, I feel fine, and I got a long lifeline." The last verse finds him fighting with "good pal" (and historical epitome of longevity) Methuselah over gambling debts and gals. You'll be humming it for days. "Late Show" is another keeper. It doesn't make much sense lyrically, "Ham on rye, ketchup and some fries, time is nigh, let that curtain rise," but the bouncy na na na chorus, buoyed by Watson's banjo, begs for a sing-along.

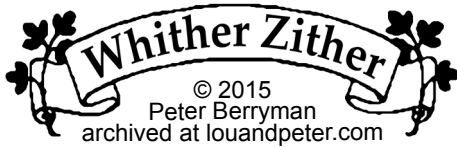
Slower tracks "Welcome" and "Turn on a Dime" give you a chance to catch your breath. The latter is a sweet admission to true love, "And you've got nothing I want, 'cept for your precious time. And I would turn on a dime for you, you know it's true." Awww. Bern turns dark

on the wordy "Welcome," threatening to shoot you in the back for a step in the wrong direction. It's not a bad song, but it is a troubled spot in an otherwise feel-good collection. You can't help but think that one of these songs is not like the others. The powerful, prayerful final track "Sky" believes that no matter how bad things are, everything will be OK as long as you can see the sky and hear your loved one breathe. Amen.

Mad Folk News is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area. Contact us at madfolk@charter.net. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.

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One Two Three, One Two Three

A few Wither Zithers ago I talked about the song *Happy Birthday To You* and how it was proven to be in the public domain. As I thought about the song for that column, and sang it, and goofed around with the lyrics, it never dawned on me that the little ditty is a waltz: three beats to a measure. As with most of us, I have sung that song hundreds if not thousands of times, but had never really considered the time signature. This got me to wondering how many other songs in the tattered songbag of my brain I have neglected to peg as waltzes over the years.

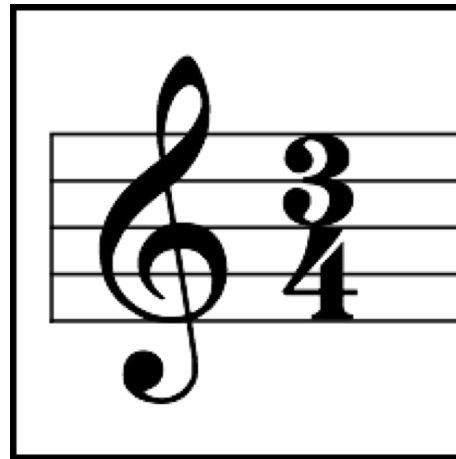
I can think of quite a few, as it turns out, and I know there are probably hundreds more that are familiar to all of us but not occurring to me at the moment. The first one that popped into my mind's ear was our national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*. It's a waltz, which is rare for an anthem, and not only that, it weirdly does not contain the name of this nation, though it's hard to misinterpret the "star spangled banner" reference. Francis S. Key gave the poem to his brother-in-law, who linked the words to the melody of a popular drinking song, and the rest is waltz history.

So. *Happy Birthday To You* and the *Star Spangled Banner*. Any other special songs in waltz time? How about holiday songs?

Well, there's *Silent Night* and *Away In a Manger*. *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*. *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*. *O Holy Night*. *Silver Bells*. *We Three Kings of Orient Are*.

And cowboy songs! I don't mean country western, though there are lots of those in 3/4 time too (*Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys*); I mean the old standards from a zillion years ago. *Home On The Range*. *Goodbye Old Paint*. *Strawberry Roan*. *Git Along Little Dogies*. *Streets of Laredo*.

Streets of Laredo has an interesting lineage. Apparently it is descended from an Irish folk song of the 1700s called *The Unfortunate Rake* (I'm thinking of writing *The Disappointed Shovel*). Another descendent of this waltzing folk song is *St James Infirmary*, made popular by Satchmo Armstrong and others. The Infirmary song and the Laredo song are similar in many ways, but *St James Infirmary* has been changed from a major key to a minor key, the time signature switched from 3/4 to 4/4, and the poor dying (dead?) subject of the song is a woman, instead of the dying cowboy of *Streets of Laredo*. The overall theme of these two songs is similar though, of a sexually careless person dying of a venereal disease, just like the original *Unfortunate Rake*. Not exactly a perky dance theme, waltz or no waltz.



There are fewer decidedly grim examples bouncing around my memory, though many folk waltzes do involve missing a loved one. I should compare these to similar themed songs in 4/4 time to get a real feeling for whether 3/4 time elicits such emotions to a disproportionate degree. *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean* is certainly sad ("Bring back my bonnie to me"). *On Top Of Old Smoky* ("I lost my true lover"). *Oh My Darling Clementine* ("...So I lost my Clementine"), and *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*, by Hank Williams Sr., maybe the most heartbroken waltz ever written.

There's *Goodnight Irene* ("Now me and my wife are parted"). *Tennessee Waltz* ("My true love was stolen away"). *The Man on the Flying Trapeze* ("I'm left in this wide world to fret

and to mourn, betrayed by a maid in her teens"); *Botany Bay* ("Oh, had I the wings of a turtle-dove, I'd soar on my pinions so high, Straight back to the arms of my Polly love, And in her sweet presence I'd die")...

Many 3/4 songs, if not sad, are at least dreamy, like *Moon River* ("Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker..."), *Mockingbird Hill* ("Only me and the sky and an old whippoorwill, singing songs in the twilight on Mockingbird Hill"). There are just plain happy songs, many from musicals, like *Oh What A Beautiful Morning* from **Oklahoma**, *My Favorite Things* from **Sound of Music**...

[Pause for a short anecdote: My music partner Lou introduced herself to a woman a few years ago who said, "Lou Berryman! I've had your song *Pflaum Road* bouncing around in my head all day!" Lou said, "I'm glad you like it; I'll tell Peter." The woman said, "I didn't say I LIKED it..." Same here. Just because I mention a 3/4 metered song that is stuck in my head doesn't mean I necessarily like it.]

...*Que Sera, Sera* from **The Man Who Knew Too Much**; *That's Amore* from **The Caddy**. *It's A Grand Night For Singin'* from **State Fair**, *Hello Young Lovers* from **The King and I**, *Oom Pah Pah* from **Oliver**, *Good Night My Someone* from **The Music Man**, *I Feel Pretty* from **West Side Story**, *I Could Have Danced All Night* from **My Fair Lady**.

The waltzes keep coming to me from all angles: *Greensleeves*. *Norwegian Wood*. *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*. *Cockles and Mussels*. *Lullaby and Good Night*. *Rock A Bye Baby*. *Are You Lonesome Tonight*. *Love Me Tender*. *You've Got To Be Carefully Taught*. *What's New Pussycat*. *Nita, Juanita*. *Away Away With Rum By Gum*. *Amazing Grace*. *Natural Woman*. *Mr. Bojangles*. *What A Wonderful World*. *Chim Chim Cheree*. *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*.

And if I were younger I have a hunch I'd know a few more recent examples. Like from the 1970s maybe. Meanwhile, c'mon kids, gather 'round and let's sing that old beloved waltz, *The Times They Are A-Changin'*.

“With his acoustic guitar and a batch of witty and insightful songs, Dan Bern is rapidly becoming the voice of a new generation of folk music.” – NPR



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

Dan Bern

Saturday, January 23

7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$12 advance, \$15 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org,

Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



Non-perishable donations of food will be collected for local food banks.

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

January 2015

Mad Folk Events



Dan Bern

Saturday January 23rd - \$12 adv / \$15 d.o.s.
-- 7pm (doors @6:30)
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Ste 105
608-661-8599

Tracy Jane Comer

• w/ Michael Bryan - Friday, January 29th -- Tuvalu Café 300 S. Main St., Verona -- 7pm -- No cover charge! (608) 845-6800

David Francey

Tuesday April 19th
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Ste 105
608-661-8599

Venues

FOLKLORE VILLAGE

Folklore Village

3210 Cty Hwy BB
Dodgeville, WI
folklorevillage.org
608-924-4000

- Sat, Jan 23 -- Founder's Centennial Commemoration @4pm
- Sat, Jan 23 -- Founder's Birthday Celebration (Jane Night) @6:30pm

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Sat, Jan 9, New Pioneers - @8pm - \$12
- Sat, Jan 23, Jeffrey Foucault & Kris Delmhurst - SOLD OUT



18 S. Water St.
Ft. Atkinson, WI
cafecarpe.com
920-563-9391

Mother Fool's
Coffeeshouse
1101 Williamson St.
motherfools.com
608-259-1030

Mother Fool's

- Fri, Jan 1, Madtown Poetry Open Mic
w/ surprise featured reader - 8pm
- Sat, Jan 2, Blood & Dust
w/ Blair Cark & Leah Brooke - 8pm - \$6
- Sat, Jan 9, Lil Rev w/ Boo Bradley (solo) - 8pm - \$7
- Fri, Jan 22, Yid Vicious - 8pm - \$6

Stoughton Opera House
381 E. Main Street
Stoughton, WI
stoughtonoperahouse.com
608-877-4400

- Fri, January 29, The Occasional Quartet:
Willy Porter, Peter Mulvey, Bill Camplin & Randy Sabien -
7:30pm - \$30
- Fri, February 26, Graminy - 7:30pm - \$20
- Fri, March 4, Beau Soleil avec Michael Doucet - 7:30pm -
\$30
- Sat, March 19, Count This Penny - 7:30pm - \$20

Misc

Old Time Jam

Monthly - 3rd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm
EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road
Coodinator: Al Wilson
cell: 608-572-0634
adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

Madison Ukulele Club-- Singalongs 1st and 3rd Weds 7:00-9:00pm
- call for location- 246-8205 (Andrew)

Cajun jam held every first Sunday 2 p.m.-4 p.m. At Cargo Coffee 750 East Washington Ave, Madison We welcome all levels of experience with instruments and Cajun music.
Call Karen at 608-238-6039 for more info. www.prairiebayoucajun.com

On the Air



Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Stephanie Elkins, Host
Sun 5:00-8:00pm
Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit www.wpr.org/simplyfolk.



WORT 89.9 FM community radio

Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm
• "On the Horizon" w/ Ford Blackwell, Tracy Lawrence, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Jason Rowe
Weekdays 9:00am-noon
• Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
• Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (contemporary singer-songwriters) w/ Jim Schwall
• Wed -- Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
• Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O'
• Fri -- Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/Chris Powers

Madison Dance

- African/African-American Dance classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm -- Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311
- SpiritMoves Ecstatic Dance 2nd and 4th Weds, 7:00-9:00 pm -- The Center for Conscious Living, 849 East Washington Ave. -- \$7 min. donation
- English Country Dance taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951
- International Dancing -- Wed and Sun; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655
- Irish Dancing -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at celticmadison.org/dance
- Italian Dancing -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 838-9403 (Philana)
- Madison Contra Dance Cooperative -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham -- 238-3394 (Steve)
- Morris Dancing -- Wed, 7:00pm -- call for location -- 238-9951
- Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 233-2956

Gigs

Dave & Anne Host Folk

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Dave & Anne at annedave@chorus.net

- January 23rd @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Harmonious Wail - \$18 / \$15 under 18
- February 28th @ 7 pm (doors at 6:30) Peter Mulvey - \$18 / \$15 under 18
- April 3rd @ 7 pm (doors at 6:30) Ellis Paul - \$20 / \$17 under 18
- May 20th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Harpeth Rising - \$20 / \$17 under 18

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